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THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH PLATONIC EPISTLES.

It is now generally agreed that the 7th and 8th Platonic Epistles are genuine. There may still be a lingering doubt, here or there, about the philosophical digression in the 7th; but with this exception both letters may be said to have established their claim to be regarded as the work of Plato.

Two of the grounds, however, on which they were formerly attacked, still remain as difficulties, for which no solution, quite satisfactory, has been put forward. Another attempt to get rid of these may be worth consideration, and a short review of some of the more recent attempts to remove them may have its uses and warnings. The difficulties are (1) the extraordinary arrangement of the subject matter of the 7th Epistle, and (2) the historical puzzle in the 8th, caused by the death of Dion's son.

I.

The 7th Epistle professes to be a reply to a request for help and counsel addressed to Plato by the friends and connexions of Dion at some time not long after his murder. By far the greater part of it is actually Plato's 'Apologia' for himself. He describes and justifies his own career, so far as it brought him into contact with the political affairs of his day, his detachment from the politics of Athens and his intervention in those of Syracuse, his relations with Dionysios the Younger, and the failure of his attempts to influence that monarch for good in politics and philosophy. The justification of Dion is combined with his own; and Howald's statement (*Die Briefe Platons*, Zürich, 1923), that Plato's grief for Dion is throbbing in every line of the letter, is scarcely an exaggeration. Certainly one of Plato's objects in writing it was to raise a worthy memorial to his friend.

The letter, which contains a little over twenty-eight pages of the edition of Stephanus, may, for the purpose of this paper, be divided roughly into three sections:

(*a*) A section of between six and seven pages giving an account of the writer's early life, of his visit to Syracuse during the time of Dionysios the Elder, and of the first of his two visits to Dionysios the Younger.

(*b*) A section of about seven pages, which opens with a statement that the writer is now going to give his advice, but of which by far the greater part consists of a complicated series of digressions, devoted in part to a justification of the conduct and policy of himself and Dion, in part to a condemnation of the wickedness of Dion's murderers. The actual advice occupies less than two pages at the end of this section.

(*c*) A section of fourteen pages, of which twelve are occupied with Plato's

second visit to the younger Dionysios and the events which immediately preceded and followed it, no less than five pages being devoted to their relations as teacher and pupil. Towards the close there is a striking peroration, in which the writer returns to Dion's murder and defends in impassioned terms his friend's character and aims. Two or three formal sentences bring the letter to an end.

This general plan was not incongruous, so long as the letter was supposed to be merely a 'defence of the Master,' written after his death by one of his disciples, to meet the posthumous attacks directed against his intervention in Sicilian affairs. But if we accept it as the work of Plato himself, and believe that it was actually sent to Syracuse in reply to an appeal for help and advice from the Dionean party—men with whom Plato had been in intimate relations during his second and third visits to Sicily, and who were well aware of the whole story of those visits—the difficulties become overwhelming. Nor are they removed by supposing that the document was an open letter sent to Sicily for general circulation. The 8th Epistle starts with a statement in plain terms that it is a document of this sort, and it fulfils its purpose. It is free from the cumbersome digressions of the 7th and from lengthy personal narratives of the past; it is straightforward and lucid in its language, and deals with the urgent problems of the present. But it requires great powers of faith to believe that the 7th Epistle was either sent to Syracuse in response to a request from the Dionean party, or written for such a purpose. Plato did not entirely lose his sense of humour in his old age; and, apart from difficulties of construction, it is most unlikely that the forcible and often quoted description of the luxury and debauchery of the Sicilian and Italian Greeks (326 *b*, *c*, *d*) would have been included in a letter intended for circulation in that region.

More than one theory has been put forward to meet this difficulty. M. Odau in his Dissertation (Königsberg, 1906) suggests that the letter actually sent to Syracuse consisted of an introductory portion comprising the first and third of the sections mentioned above, and of a concluding portion which was what we have now as the 8th Epistle. A document thus constituted would give, in a consecutive form, both a personal defence of Plato and full and intelligible counsel to his friends.

Odau supposes that the 7th and 8th Epistles, as we now have them, are the result of a re-editing which this document received not long after Plato's death, from one of his disciples who had access to his papers. Among these the conjectural editor found a rough copy of a letter, which was Plato's first draft of a reply to the request of Dion's friends for advice, but which had been rejected by him in favour of the fuller document described above. The editor, he supposes, after certain necessary alterations in this draft, interpolated it, with a few introductory sentences by himself, after the words ὁ δ' ἐνίκησεν ἀντιτείνων in Ep. VII. 330*b*. This rendered it necessary to detach from the document its concluding portion, 352*b* to 357*d*. A formula of greeting was, therefore, inserted, and this portion was transformed into a separate letter. Confirmation for the

supposed detachment of this portion was found in the fact that the formula of greeting for the 8th Epistle is actually missing in the Paris MS. A.

As no one now is likely seriously to support this theory, it need not be discussed in detail. Its author has probably long ago abandoned it. It has the merit, however, of recognizing that the letter, in its present form, is an impossible document, if its setting is accepted as historical fact.

Odau's theory is criticized by Hackforth (*The Authorship of the Platonic Epistles*, Manchester, 1913, pp. 95 sqq.), who defends the letter as it stands, justifying its digressions and arrangement. His defence shows adequately that the letter, regarded as a piece of literature, is a work which has, both in structure and style, the characteristics of Plato's latest manner, and that it is not unworthy of a place by the side of his *Laws*. But it does not remove the difficulty of believing that it was actually sent to Sicily in answer to an appeal from the Dionean party.

O. Apelt also (*Platons Briefe*, Leipzig, 1918, pp. 125-7) is satisfied with the letter as it stands. He feels strongly that, though addressed to the friends of Dion, it was an open letter, intended for general circulation—for Athens, perhaps, more than for Sicily—that its superscription was a sort of 'Deck-adresse,' behind which stood the general public. But he expresses no doubt as to the reality of the historical setting, which the letter presupposes. W. Andreae's edition of the Letters (Jena, 1923) contains an excellent account of the 7th, but with regard to the historical setting his attitude is the same as that of Apelt. C. Ritter (Plato's *Gesetze*, Komm. p. 376) and U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (*Platon* I. 647), both accept the request for counsel from the Dionean party as matter of fact; the latter considers that only the 8th Epistle was sent to Sicily in response to it, the 7th being intended for general circulation only, and this is the view which comes nearest to removing the difficulty; but it does not go far enough.

Two of the later editors, E. Howald (*loc. cit.* pp. 20 sqq.) and L. A. Post (*Thirteen Epistles of Plato*, Oxford, 1925) feel that the structure of the 7th Epistle requires more explanation. Howald supplies this by a theory which is as conjectural as that of Odau. According to him the original nucleus of the letter was a speech composed by Plato in defence of the Sicilian episode of his life and of his deeper philosophical teaching. When this was finished, but not yet published, he received the request for help and advice from the friends of Dion, and formed the 'unfortunate idea' of serving up his speech as part of his reply to his correspondents, combining with it a section containing his advice. But before the document in this new form was finished, Howald supposes that another letter arrived from Sicily, informing Plato of the fall of Kallippos and the seizure of Syracuse by Dion's nephew, Hipparinos. He then decided to leave unfinished this composite document, and, in place of it, wrote and despatched the 8th Epistle. Our 7th Letter thus remained on his hands as an unfinished draft—a supposition which accounts for the numerous difficulties which its language presents.

Post's theory has a good deal in common with that of Howald. He thinks that the part of the letter which forms Plato's *Apologia pro Vita Sua* was composed first before the murder of Dion, that it came into circulation, and suggested to Isokrates his Apologia in the Speech on the Antidosis—that later it was fitted into the framework in which we have it, the framework being a letter of advice to the friends of Dion, who wrote to Plato after they had fled from Syracuse to Leontini. He does not share Howald's view that the letter was never sent, but he considers that 'the joints between Plato's defence and his letter of advice are so rudely constructed that the artifice is transparent.' He suggests that the Speech of Isokrates appeared while Plato was still writing, and that the defence of Dion was introduced to meet covert attacks on him contained in the orator's praises of Timotheos. The relation between the 7th Epistle and the Speech on the Antidosis is considered in a Note at the end of this paper.

Structural theories of this kind, when there is no positive evidence of matter or style to prove difference of authorship or of date for the divisions proposed, must rest for the most part upon imagination. The 7th Epistle calls for different treatment. The first step is to recognize, with U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, that the letter was not sent to Sicily, nor written for that purpose. I need not repeat the proofs of this. But we must go further than this, and put the question: Is it necessary to treat the letter from the friends of Dion as actual fact? If the 7th Epistle was neither sent to them nor written for them, is it not as plain as daylight that their appeal is merely a literary fiction, introduced as a picturesque setting for Plato's letter? Plato had a gift for imaginative fiction. No one thinks of taking as actual fact the whole setting of the *Republic* or the *Symposium*. It is obvious that in these cases we have the same skilful combination of fact with fiction which we expect in a historical novel. Surely we may credit Plato with the power of providing as good a setting for a letter. He not only had it, but has used it so successfully, that his modern readers follow one another in accepting his little fiction as sober fact.

Let us try to put ourselves into the position of Plato at Athens, when the news of Dion's murder reached him. It was conveyed by a letter from Kallippos to the Government of Athens, describing himself as a tyrannicide[1] (Plut. *Dion* 58). Kallippos had, in fact, done what everyone suspected Dion of intending to do: he had seized the coveted position of tyrant. He was master of the impregnable citadel, and maintained his power by the aid of the mercenaries, with whom he had ingratiated himself by bribery before the murder. The entry to the harbour was commanded by the citadel, and was so narrow that only one ship could leave it at a time; under the tyranny none left it without careful scrutiny (Plat. Ep. VII., 329 *e*). It is most unlikely that any letter from the friends of Dion was conveyed by the ship that carried the

[1] It is worth noting that Aristotle in his passing reference to the murder (*Rhet.* I. 12, 1373*a* 19) treats it as justifiable, on the ground that Dion was actually a tyrant.

despatch of Kallippos, or by any other that left Syracuse during the ensuing months. Of actual occurrences during the thirteen months' rule of Kallippos very little is known. In the course of it (we are not told when) the Dionean party were obliged to fly from Syracuse to Leontini. But from there communications with Athens must have been a matter of some difficulty. Nor is it likely that the party thought of appealing to Plato for help or advice. They had their own plans for the removal of Kallippos, which were ultimately successful, and to which I shall return later; but they were not plans which Plato was likely to be able to assist in any way.

The letter of Kallippos to the Athenians gave, no doubt, the version of the story which best suited his own purposes; but it would, in the course of time, be supplemented by news from other sources as to the part which he had played in Dion's downfall and the nature of his subsequent rule. There would be much uncertainty about details, but no doubt about the central fact—the complete failure of Dion's schemes, and the final shipwreck of the hopes which enthusiasts had associated with Plato's visits to Sicily. The scraps of literary gossip which have survived are sufficient evidence that adverse critics did not neglect their opportunity; and to anyone reading between the lines of the 7th Epistle it is plain enough that we have in it the defence of a man who had been the object of unkind attacks. Plato maintains an attitude of dignified aloofness, and does not descend to personal controversy with antagonists. But the concluding sentences evidently refer to such attacks, and when in 330*c* he speaks of those who put the question why he made a second visit to the younger Dionysios, the people whom he means must be at Athens and not at Syracuse.

The position at Athens called for an immediate defence of Plato's interventions in practical politics, of his attitude as a teacher of philosophy, and of his friend Dion. The defence had to be in some literary form. The dialogue was not suited to such a purpose. Howald suggests that Plato actually wrote a speech. In the middle of the fourth century the writings of Isokrates had made the fictitious speech, published but never delivered, a familiar form for the political pamphlet. But Plato had never been a professional speech-writer, and it is most unlikely that he would have entered into competition with Isokrates by adopting this form for his defence. The letter was not open to the same objection. Isokrates had, it is true, thrown three of his public pamphlets into this form; but Plato himself had used it in his 3rd Epistle, which had been sent to Sicily two or three years before, for circulation as a piece of political propaganda. It is rather short for the purpose—four or five pages of Stephanus—but it contains dramatic touches which must have made it a telling document at the moment. Its setting has all the marks of fiction. The envoys,[1] whose reports of the conversations of Dionysios are said to be

[1] Plato's envoys may have been suggested to him by the fictitious envoy in the first sentence of the Epistle of Isokrates to the children of Jason of Pherae, which was published about three years before the 3rd Platonic Epistle.

the occasion of the 3rd Letter, may be assumed to be as imaginary as the letter from the friends of Dion which is the professed occasion of the 7th. It was natural that Plato should adopt for his defence the form of a similar but more extensive letter, enlivened in the same way with dramatic scenes and scraps of dialogue, and provided with a suitable, but purely fictitious, setting; and it was surely a happy thought to make this letter a reply to an appeal from the Dionean party; for it gave him a reason for combining with his own justification that of his friend.

If the 7th Epistle is regarded in this light, as a purely literary document, intended for readers at Athens and in the Greek world generally, its eccentricities of arrangement call for no defence from those who are familiar with the *Laws*, on which Plato must have been working at the same time. Its digressions, and the liberties which the writer allows himself, are not a whit more startling than those of the *Laws*; and it will always be found that, puzzling as the procedure sometimes is, there is some method behind it. The writer may here or there have inserted old material, which he had already on his hands (as, e.g., at 330*c* 9, *τὸν συμβούλευοντα κ.τ.λ.*). Such insertions are often traceable in the work of old men. There is no need for any theory of editing or of reconstruction, except for those who believe in the reality of the letter from the friends of Dion. Let this be transferred once for all to the region of fiction to which it belongs, and all serious difficulties with regard to structure are removed.

Before leaving the 7th Epistle something must be said about the date of its publication. Here again we have to depend on conjecture; but two things stand out clearly:

(1) The letter was finished before the end of the rule of Kallippos. Plato regarded Kallippos as a fiend incarnate, and some allusion to his downfall would have been inevitable, if it had occurred.

(2) It bears in many places the marks of hurried writing. The writer's mind is too full of intense feeling for adherence to conventions of literary prose. Instances of this will be found in 325*c* 5 to 326*b* 4, 332*c* 6 to 333*a* 5, 335*a* 2 to *c* 1, 335*e* 3 to 336*b* 8; and most of the narrative parts of the letter give the impression of having been rapidly dictated. The whole can hardly have taken more than two or three months to write.

Now as to the date of Dion's murder there is reasonable certainty. Diodorus (XVI. 31) places it in Ol. 106, 3, and in the archonship of Diotimos; both these years began at the summer solstice of 354 B.C. Plutarch (*Dion*, 58) says that the murder took place on the day of the festival of the Korea: this was a harvest festival (Diod. V. 4): his authority at this point of his Life of Dion is most probably Timaios,[1] who must have talked with those who were contemporaries of the murder, and may be accepted as a credible witness for

[1] See W. Biedenweg, *Plutarchs Quellen in den Lebensbeschreibungen des Dion und Timoleon*. Leipzig, 1884. There is much that is still valuable in this monograph, but for the Life of Dion the writer was much hampered by adopting the views current at the moment about the Platonic Epistles, and this part of the work ought to be done again.

the date. We may date the murder, therefore, about midsummer, 354 B.C.[1] Kallippos must have written to Athens soon after he had secured his position, and his letter was probably received before the end of August. The 7th Epistle may well have been finished and in circulation before the end of the year 354 B.C.[2]

II.

Some apology is needed for bringing up again the historical difficulty in the 8th Epistle caused by the death of Dion's son. For it has recently been dealt with at some length in L. A. Post's paper, 'A supposed Discrepancy,' etc. (*Amer. Journ. Phil.*, Vol. XLV., p. 371). But the data of the problem are altered, if the view is accepted that the 7th Epistle was not preceded by any communication from the friends of Dion. They are still further altered by a point which I shall now try to establish with regard to the 8th Epistle. Before doing so, I must call attention to two features in that letter. (1) It stands by itself, and is quite independent of the 7th Epistle. The supposed references to the earlier letter have been misinterpreted. Howald (*l.c.*, p. 19) establishes this clearly, and his arguments need not be repeated here. (2) It does not profess to be a reply to any letter from the Dionean Party.

The letter announces itself as an open letter, and is well suited to this purpose. When was it written? Those who accept it as genuine have usually assumed that it belongs to the time *after* the expulsion of Kallippos. Why? There is not a word in the letter itself to justify such a view, and a great deal against it. What we learn from the letter is that the Dionean party have joined forces with Hipparinos, Dion's nephew and the half-brother of Dionysios the Younger—that they have received help from him, that he has shown a pious temperament (ὅσιος τρόπος), and that, though the son of a tyrant, he is of his own free will setting the city free (356*a*; the present ἐλευθεροῖ implies attempted action). There is not a word to suggest that Kallippos has already been ousted from the citadel. Surely if Plato had heard that this had happened, he would have dwelt upon it with some emphasis. On the contrary, the letter implies that Kallippos is still a person to be reckoned with. Plato says that he wishes to bring about a coalition of all parties, including Dionysios, but excepting the one ἀνοσιουργός, i.e. Kallippos (353*c* 3). The position is clear enough, if we suppose Kallippos to be in possession of the citadel.

Our information from other sources about the events of these months is meagre. They belong to the interval between Plutarch's lives of Dion and

[1] Holm (*Gesch. Sic.* II. 463) gives the date as August 354 B.C. on the grounds stated above. August is too late for the Sicilian harvest, which would take place in June. Bury (*Gk. Hist.* 672, Ed. 1902) and Freeman (*Sicily*, Vol. IV. 285) give June 354 B.C. as the date of the murder. If we are to bring it into Ol. 106, 3 and the archonship of Diotimos, it must have been towards the close of the month, after the summer solstice.

[2] For the bearing of this date on the relations between the 7th Epistle and the Speech of Isokrates on the Antidosis see note at the end of this paper.

Timoleon, and the only facts which we learn from him are—that the first act of Kallippos was to put the family of Dion in prison, where they remained till released after his expulsion; that during this captivity a posthumous child was born to Dion; and that Kallippos lost Syracuse while engaged in an expedition against Katane (Plut. *Dion*, 57, 58).

I have referred above to Diodorus XVI. 31, where he dates the murder in Ol. 106, 3: the only further detail added there is that Kallippos reigned for thirteen months. In XVI. 36 under Ol. 106, 4 and the archonship of Eudemos (353 B.C.) he continues the story as follows: 'In Syracuse civil strife occurred between the friends of Dion and Kallippos. The friends of Dion were worsted and fled to Leontini. After some time Hipparinos, the son of Dionysios (i.e. Dionysios I.) sailed to Syracuse with a force, and Kallippos was defeated and driven out of the city. Hipparinos, after recovering his father's tyranny, reigned for two years.'

A passage in Polyaenus (*Strateg.* V. 4: see Hackforth, *l.c.*, p. 85) gives the story rather differently. He says: 'Hipparinos, being at Leontini, and perceiving that the city of the Syracusans was undefended, because the citizens had marched to a certain place, marched from Leontini and seized the city of the Syracusans.' One more gleam of light comes from the fact that Eudemos, the friend of Aristotle, one of the associates of Plato in the Academy who accompanied Dion in his Sicilian expedition, lost his life in one of the attacks on Kallippos which the party of Dion made from their refuge at Leontini. From the story told by Cicero (*De Div.* I. 25) it seems clear that the death of Eudemos took place in 353 B.C.

The most probable view of the facts is that there were two sets of operations—attacks by land from Leontini, and a final assault with ships which led to the capture of the citadel. The ships must have come from Dionysios, who was probably behind the operations all the while, all parties having united for the moment to get rid of the alien, Kallippos.

If we now put the question, at what moment was the 8th Epistle written, there ought to be little doubt that it was after the news of the earlier attacks from Leontini had arrived at Athens and before the final blow which gave Hipparinos the citadel. Obvious as this view is, no one seems to have put it forward. I can see no possible objection to it, and shall adopt it for the purpose of this paper, in addition to the point previously established, that the letter from the friends of Dion, mentioned in the 7th Epistle, is a literary fiction. On these suppositions I will turn to the historical difficulty of the 8th Epistle.

In the latter part of that letter Dion is introduced giving his advice in the form of an address to the Syracusans. He recommends the establishment of an oligarchical constitution to be designed by commissioners, and at the head of it three kings, in a position resembling that of the kings of Sparta or the English monarchy. The three persons whom Dion suggests for this position are (1) his own son, whose name is not mentioned; (2) Hipparinos, the son of

Dionysios the Elder, and (3) Dionysios the Younger; and the difficulty is that three other authorities, Plutarch, Nepos, and Aelian, state that Dion's son had met his end, either by accident or by suicide, before his father's murder.

The words in which Dion is made to put forward the recommendation of his son are these (355e): 'And besides all this do you, with all sincerity and soundness of purpose and with the gods helping you, set up as king—in the first place, my own son, as a reward for two services, that rendered by me and that rendered by my father, for he at that time freed the city from barbarians, and I have now twice freed it from tyrants, as you yourselves have witnessed.' Again at the close of his speech, when justifying his proposals, Dion adds: 'These are not impossibilities. For when a policy has already been adopted by two minds, and presents itself as obviously the best course for reasoning men to adopt, surely the man who pronounces it an impossibility is ill-advised. The two minds that I mean are those of Hipparinos, the son of Dionysios, and of my own son. For if these two agree together, I think that all the rest of the Syracusans who care for their country must adopt the same view.'

It is usually said that there are three conceivable ways of meeting this difficulty: We may say either (*a*) that the other authorities are wrong, and that Dion's son was not dead; or (*b*) that the news of his death had not reached reached Plato; or (*c*) that Plato is referring to Dion's posthumous son, who was born while his mother was shut up in the prison of Kallippos.

The third of these views is put forward strongly by Post in the paper referred to above (*Am. Journ. Phil.* Vol. XLV.), who tries hard to show that in the passage quoted above Plato uses language suited to an infant in arms. If we have decided that the 8th Epistle was written while Dion's widow was in prison, we need no longer consider this view as a possibility. For during the mother's imprisonment no tidings of the birth of the posthumous son could have reached Plato at Athens. The posthumous child cannot possibly be the person alluded to.

We have, therefore, only to consider the first two views. As the historical problem is a nice one, it is worth while to give a fuller account of the data. Plutarch, the most important authority, who here again is probably drawing his information from Timaios, tells us (*Dion*, 55) that, when the conspiracy of Kallippos was being formed, Dion was sitting one evening in the portico of his house. He heard a sound at the other end of the portico, and, looking up, saw a woman of lofty stature, who resembled in dress and features the Furies of tragedy, and was sweeping the house with a broom. Startled and alarmed, he sent for his friends, told them the vision, and begged them to stay with him for the night, in case it should re-appear. It was not seen again; but a few days later, his son, who was just growing out of boyhood (σχεδὸν ἀντίπαις ὤν), in consequence of some vexation and anger arising from a trifling and childish cause, threw himself from the roof and was killed.

Plutarch adds that Kallippos thereupon spread a rumour that Dion, having lost his own son, was going to adopt Apollokrates, the son of Dionysios, as his

successor in the tyranny, and that this helped him to bring his conspiracy to a head.

Nepos probably had some other authority before him. He mentions the suicide parenthetically (*Dion*, 4) and without any precise indication of time, while relating an earlier part of Dion's life. He says that, while Dion was in the Peloponnese getting together forces for his expedition, Dionysios, having Dion's family in his power, encouraged the boy in vicious habits, so that his character became completely depraved. After the return of Dion, when he was trying to reform his son's character, and had placed him under strict guardians, the boy could not endure this new kind of life, and committed suicide by throwing himself down from the roof of the house.

Aelian is certainly following a different authority. He tells the story (*V. H.* III. 4) as a short anecdote with no details of time, grouping it with other instances of the fortitude of parents on the occasion of the death of their children. He says: 'Dion, the son of Hipparinos and the associate of Plato, happened to be engaged in public and national affairs, when his son lost his life by falling from the roof into the court of the house. Dion did not allow himself to be affected by this incident, but went on doing that on which he was engaged before.'

These stories do not agree together, and it is easy to criticize each of them individually as suspicious. But they do show that the writers had before them more than one independent authority for the fact of the death of Dion's son. That fact is supported by another important piece of testimony, which some of the critics have ignored. Dion's son quite certainly disappears from the scene after his father's murder. He was not one of those imprisoned by Kallippos and released at the end of his rule; nor was he with those poor unfortunates when they subsequently fled to Hiketas at Leontini and were done to death by him (Plut. *Tim.* 33, *Dion*, 58). If he had been alive during these transactions, his name must have been mentioned.

The only possible supposition is that his death had actually occurred before that of Dion. There may have been even at the time some doubt about the circumstances, as there often is about tragedies in high life. It may have been, as Aelian's story implies, an accident; and gossip may have converted the accident into a suicide and then embellished it with details, disparaging to Dionysios and illustrative of the fortitude of Dion. But it would not be sound criticism to dismiss the whole incident as fiction, because Plutarch and others are fond of telling a good story.

Plato, however, certainly wrote under the impression that Dion's son was alive. If there were reason to believe that he had trustworthy evidence before him, the historical difficulty would be serious. So long as people believed that the 7th Epistle was preceded by a letter to Plato from the friends of Dion, the difficulty was serious. But if we regard that letter as a literary fiction, the problem is at once simplified.

Plutarch's narrative implies that the interval between the death of Dion's

son and the crime of Kallippos was a short one. Affairs at Syracuse were in a highly disturbed state; it is at least probable that no communication was sent to Athens during this interval; and after Dion's murder, as we have seen, the correspondence must have been at once stopped by Kallippos. It may have been renewed, somewhat tardily, after the Dionean party had removed to Leontini and formed their coalition with Hipparinos and Dionysios, whose ships must have been the means of forwarding any communication sent. But need we suppose that the letters of the friends of Dion would, at that time, necessarily refer to the son of Dion, who had been removed from the scene several months before? They would be full of their own attempted operations and other matters which, like the death of Eudemos, belonged to the present. There is no improbability in supposing that the death of Dion's son was left unmentioned, and that Plato wrote the 8th Epistle in complete ignorance that such an event had taken place. If then we give to the 8th Epistle its proper date, the historical difficulty is removed.

One question remains, which may now be approached on the supposition that Plato, when he wrote the 7th Epistle, had not heard of the death of Dion's son: Who is the Hipparinos mentioned at the beginning of that letter? Is he Dion's nephew, or his son, who bore the same name? The passage runs as follows: 'When I made my first visit to Sicily, being then about forty years old, Dion was of the same age as Hipparinos is now, and the opinion which he then formed was that which he always retained—I mean, the belief that the Syracusans ought to be free and governed by the best laws. So it is no matter for surprise, if some god should make Hipparinos adopt the same opinion as Dion about the forms of government.'

At the time of Plato's first visit to Sicily, Dion was about twenty years old. The Hipparinos referred to must, therefore, have been a person of about twenty when the letter was written. Dion's son, at the time of his death, is said by Plutarch to have been *ἀντίπαις*, i.e. about eighteen years of age. Now Plato had been on very intimate terms with the family during his second and third visits to Syracuse. He must have known Dion's son well; but he would not have the same precise knowledge of his age which the boy's mother had. Six years had elapsed since his return to Athens, and it is not at all impossible that he figured to himself the youth of eighteen as a young man of about twenty, especially if he wished to emphasize a parallelism between the son and his father.

On the other hand, there are serious difficulties in the way, if we suppose the other Hipparinos to be referred to as a young man of about twenty. He, too, must have been well known to Plato, and the circumstances of his birth were peculiar. Dionysios the Elder, who had lost his first wife, married on one day in 398 B.C. two wives, Doris the Lokrian, and Aristomache, daughter of his partisan, the elder Hipparinos. One of his titles to be considered a born ruler is the fact that he managed this quaint household successfully. Doris bore him a son without delay, Dionysios the Younger; but Aristomache remained for some years childless. Dionysios, suspecting that this was due to the drugs

or incantations of the mother of Doris, took effective steps for the removal of this troublesome mother-in-law (Plut. *Dion*, 3). At some subsequent date—we are not told when—Aristomache bore him four children, two sons and two daughters (*l.c.* 6). Hipparinos was the elder of the two sons, but we do not know whether he was older or younger than his sisters. If he was the person referred to in this passage, he must have been born not much less than twenty-four years after his mother's marriage, and she must subsequently have given birth to at least one other child. This is not a physical impossibility; but it is much more likely that the interval of Aristomache's childlessness was shorter, and that her elder son in 354 B.C. was a man of about thirty. It is therefore simpler to suppose that the Hipparinos here mentioned was Dion's son; and there is nothing in the passage itself which renders this at all unlikely. Language produces different effects on different minds. But surely most readers must feel it more probable that the two persons of whom Plato is here speaking are, not uncle and nephew, but father and son.

Note on the Relation Between the 7th Platonic Epistle and the Speech of Isokrates on the Antidosis.

Post (*Thirteen Epistles*, p. 58) rightly emphasizes the close connexion between these two works, which belong to the same year, 354/3 B.C. Both are Apologies in the form of autobiographies, and the connexion between Plato and Dion has something in common with that which Isokrates claims to have existed between himself and Timotheos. Some of Post's points are overpressed. It is going too far to say that Isokrates twits Plato with the civil strife and executions that followed from Dion's success.

We may, however, take it as fairly certain that one of the two works inspired the other; and if, as shown above, it is probable on other grounds that the 7th Epistle was in circulation in the early part of 353 B.C., it is most likely that it was the source of inspiration. Other indications point in the same direction. Isokrates had not the same pressing reasons for an Apologia as Plato. There is nothing in the 7th Epistle which can be construed into a reference to Isokrates, while unmistakeable references to Plato and his school abound in the Speech on the Antidosis. Quite an appreciable part of that work may not unfairly be described as an attempt on the part of Isokrates to justify his own career and activities as against those of Plato. Both works have a fictitious setting; but their methods of handling the fiction are different, each being characteristic of its author. Plato leaves the reader to find out for himself the little mystification about the letter from the Dionean party, while Isokrates begins by revealing his secret and making sure that his readers are under no mistake about it.

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